DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 153 CS 511 405

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TITLE	Vocabulary Development, Reading and the Learner.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	10p.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Computer Assisted Instruction; Elementary Secondary Education; Science Instruction; Social Studies; Student Needs; Verbal Development; *Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS	*Learning Across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary development is essential for a student to become a good reader. By learning new words in terms of meaning and use, the student can increase his/her listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies. A student may increase vocabulary development when communicating informally with others or formally within a classroom setting. This paper discusses vocabulary development across the curriculum, particularly in social studies and in science. The paper lists the following steps in teaching vocabulary development: the new word should be printed neatly on the board; students should use the new word in a sentence contextually; the teacher needs to provide for individual differences; the teacher should observe how frequently a student uses a new concept meaningfully; students may assist others in vocabulary development; the teacher should observe that students are actively engaged in learning; students should be encouraged to raise questions when they do not understand what is being taught; and students should use self appraisal pertaining to growth in vocabulary knowledge and use. The paper cites 13 learning opportunities which aid students in vocabulary development, including reading aloud to students; engaging in storytelling; using dictionaries and glossaries; and participating at the speaking center. It considers computer-assisted instruction in vocabulary development, finding that it has a positive influence on a student's motivation, interest, and learning; and that computer-assisted reading instruction has been effective. (Contains 10 references.) (NKA)

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Vocabulary Development, Reading and the Learner.

by Marlow Ediger

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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT, READING AND THE LEARNER

Vocabulary development is essential to becoming a good reader. Each academic discipline has unique vocabulary terms for pupils to master. By learning new words in terms of meaning and use, the pupil can increase his/her listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies. A pupil may increase vocabulary development when communicating informally with others or formally within a classroom setting. The listening vocabulary may then be developed. In oral communication, the speaking vocabulary, also, has chances to develop. Then too, a considerable amount of oral reading is emphasized in ongoing units of study. Written assigned work in ongoing lessons stresses the importance of the writing vocabulary. Each of these four vocabularies is salient to develop within pupil. A developmental vocabulary emphasis must be in the offing.

Vocabulary Development Across the Curriculum

Learnings in vocabulary development need to be planned for each curriculum area taught. Unit planning and teaching must place major stress upon increasing pupil vocabularies. In a social studies unit on maps and globes, the following vocabulary terms appear to be vital for pupil acquisition:

* meridians and parallels
* latitude and longitude
* degrees, Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn
* the north pole and the south pole
* elevation and its related map/globe legend
* the Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, and Indian Oceans
* climates such as the Mediterranean, continental, Polar, equatorial, monsoon, ocean currents (which change temperature readings on coastal lands), and desert
* land forms such as plains, plateaus, desert, forest, mountains, hills, oceans, rivers, seas, and lakes
* grasslands, tillable land, and latitudinal features (low, middle, and high). Some textbooks label these as torrid, temperate, and frigid zones
* hemispheres --- northern, southern, eastern and western (See Parker, 2001, 390- 394).

The teacher needs to introduce new terms, in number, which pupils can master successfully. Too many new vocabulary terms can be frustrating for learners and too few can make for boredom.

Thus, a developmentally appropriate vocabulary program is desirable.

In science units of study, the teacher needs to determine which vocabulary terms are salient for pupils to study, as well as the number which are feasible for pupil mastery within a lesson or unit of study. A science unit related to the above named social studies unit might be "The Changing Surface of the Earth." Vital vocabulary words might well be the following:

* faults, folds, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.
* magma, lava, igneous, sedimentary, metamorphic
* erosion, The Grand Canyon, ice age, glaciers, moraines,
* The Appalachians, The Rocky Mountains (Blough and Schwartz, 1974, Chapter Three).

There are suggested sequential learnings possible for teachers in guiding pupils in vocabulary development. As much as possible, concrete learning opportunities should be in evidence such as the possible hands on experiences which include

1. pupils seeing model faults, folds, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. These models can also be made by pupils. There are selected illustrations in science textbooks, for example, which illustrate these concepts in the semiconcrete.
2. pupils should have ample opportunities to see igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks. They might develop a collection and label each of these kinds of rocks. Pictures of the three classification of rocks may be viewed and uses found for each kind of rock.
3. pupils may view soil erosion on the school grounds and measures taken to remediation these problems. Video tapes and filmstrips may be used to view the Grand Canyon, the ice age, glaciers, moraines, The Appalachians, and the Rocky Mountains. Dioramas, collages, and bulletin board displays may be developed pertaining to these phenomena.
4. exhibits from pupil products may be labeled and shown to all pupils from other classrooms. Each pupil or committee of learners should explain to visitors what has been made. Thus, a pupil or committee making a model earthquake in science should be able to clearly communicate contents on volcanic eruptions as to their causes.
5. a model scene may be made of soil erosion showing he affects of heavy rainfall. One box with soil therein may be grass covered, the other box being without vegetative covering. Both may be slanted at the same slope with the same amount of water

poured on each box to notice which has the most soil runoff (See Ediger and Rao, 2001, Chapter Ten).

In teaching vocabulary development, pupils need to see the each word in neat manuscript print on the chalkboard, prior to reading about each in the basal textbook, or other reading source. The abstract word should be associated with the concrete teaching aid. Thus, if pupils are to read about folding , They should see model folds (concrete), followed by illustrations (semiconcrete) on video tape or in a filmstrip. The model may be shone/made as each new word is being introduced to pupils.

Next, pupils should use the new word(s) in a sentence contextually. It is good, when readiness permits, for pupils to write a sentence or paragraph involving the new terms. The reading/writing connection needs to be emphasized. Depth teaching in vocabulary development is important.

Third, the teacher needs to be a top person to provide for individual differences. Not all pupils will need the same number of learning opportunities to understand the new vocabulary term. The teacher needs to assess when a learner understands the new vocabulary concept thoroughly and have this pupil progress sequentially.

Fourth, the teacher needs to observe how frequently a pupil uses a new concept meaningfully. It is only good when pupils can use a previously learned concept in a new situation be it in oral or written expression to show meaning and understanding.

Fifth, pupils may teach each other or assist others in vocabulary development. Collaborative learning is important to many pupils; others like to work by themselves. These are learning styles which need to be respected. Optimal achievement is desired from each pupil.

Sixth, the teacher needs to observe that pupils are actively engaged in learning. When pupils start to fidget and not pay attention, the teacher must change to a different learning activity. It is futile to teach vital concepts when pupils are not listening or start to do other things than learn vocabulary terms, in this case.

Seventh, pupils should be encouraged to raise questions when they do not understood what is being taught. Valuable feedback from the teacher may accrue when pupil ask about those items which are vague and hazy. Vocabulary development should help pupils to broaden their individual reading skills and abilities (Ediger, 2002, 69- 70).

Eighth, pupils need to appraise the self pertaining to

growth in vocabulary knowledge and use. Thus the pupil might respond to the following self evaluation questions:

* Do I make attempts to learn new vocabulary items on my own?
* Do I ask questions when I do not understand the meaning of a vocabulary term?
* Am I able to give a definition or use for the new vocabulary concept in a sentence?
* Do I enjoy studying vocabulary terms?
* Do I keep a record of new vocabulary terms mastered, as well as list those yet to become a part of my daily use?
* Am i interested in learning about new vocabulary terms?
* Do I share with others what I have learned about vocabulary terms?
* Do I make a definite effort to use new terms in class discussions?
* When reading library books, do I list vocabulary terms which are not understood?
* Am I vocabulary word conscious in that I focus on these kinds of learnings? (Ediger, 1998, 161- 166).

The teacher may receive feedback from learners in terms of how pupils feel and what they say about vocabulary study. A rich set of learning opportunities should assist pupils to achieve vital objectives. Reading knowledge and skills should improve in ongoing units of study in vocabulary. A separate unit may be devoted to "Increasing Our Vocabularies." The objectives, learning activities, and assessment procedures would then stress and focus upon improving the human vocabulary. Most teachers weave in to a unit of study, words which are vital for pupils to achieve. The unit may deal with social studies, science, mathematics, literature, art, music, and physical education. The integrated curriculum is then being emphasized.

There are a plethora of leaning opportunities which aid pupils contextually in vocabulary development:

1. reading orally to pupils
2. having pupils engage in discussions
3. participating in activities at the listening center
4. reading library books
5. participating at the audio visual center
6. being involved in the writing center
7. making pictured dictionaries
8. engaging in story telling
9. using dictionaries and the glossary
10. taking turns reading aloud in small groups

11. being involved in individualized spelling
12. participating at the speaking center
13. discussion objects at the interest center (Ediger and Rao, 2003,127).

Computer Assisted Instruction in Vocabulary Development

Computer assisted instruction has a positive influence on student's motivation, interest, and learning. Computer use may be new to the pupil and thus be a motivating factor in learning. The so called halo affect might then be in evidence. Never the less the child may progress rapidly with this new method. Learners do tend to like learning in different ways and with diverse methodology. Thus, there can be tutorial software used in vocabulary development. New content is being learned as designed by the programmer. The programmer has sequenced these experiences to make for optimal achievement and progress. The pupil obtains results immediately if he/she responded correctly to an item. Generally, there will be a high rate of success if the tutorial program is on the developmental level of the child, meaning it is not too difficult nor too easy for that learner. A high rate of answering correctly to each programmed item will usually be in evidence. In addition to tutorial programs, there are also drill and practice programs. The purpose in these kinds of programs is to assist pupils with review and practice of previously learned vocabulary lessons and terms. Gaming is a different kind of software program in that pupils may play games in vocabulary development to see who wins with two sides or two players competing against each other. Simulation experiences attempts to devise a program which relates to real life experiences to the best possible when using programmed software. Reality is brought in to the studying of vocabulary terms with life like situations.

Many software programs offer 'read alongs' and 'edutainment' that assist students as they learn letter sounds, vocabulary concepts, comprehension, and to enjoy literature. Interactive multimedia allows the printed word to take on sight, sound, and action which visually and mentally stimulated the individual.

One such program is Daisy Quest 1 and 2 (Mitchell, Chad, and Stacy, 1984- 2000). An indepth study investigated the phonological awareness in preschool children utilizing the software (Brinkman and Torgesen, (1994). Each child in the treatment group interacted with a computerized story concerning

"Daisy the friendly dragon. A computer, monitor, and standard headphone were provided to allow the child, as he/she listened to the story, to discover clues, revealing where the dragon was hiding. The clues were revealed by answering at least four correct answers in a row. The skills assessed were rhyming words, beginning sounds, ending sounds, middle sounds, and whether a word contained a given number of sounds. The study revealed that children in the treatment group responded at a higher and faster rate of reading readiness than children in the control group. Not only did the children in the treatment group gain knowledge in their ability to read; these preschoolers had fun... (Boling, Martin, and Martin, 2002).

There are many reasons why computer assisted reading instruction has been effective. The computer provides immediate responses and practice for the child learning a skill. Struggling readers interface with the computer and practice a skill without embarrassing situations in the classroom. Interaction with a multisensory format provides motivation and a positive attitude toward reading and learning (Case and Truscott, 1999; Forcier, 1999).

Computerized programs in reading generally

1. have pupils read/study a small amount of information, located on the monitor
2. respond to a multiple choice test item covering that information
3. pupils receive immediate feedback on their answer given
4. the computer keeps record of correct and incorrect responses given by the learner
5. the teacher may use the information for diagnosis and remedial work. The pattern continues rather consistently of pupil reading, responding, and checking in using programmed materials in reading.

Conclusion

There ar a plethora of reasons for pupils to develop a rich listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary:

1. subject matter is expressed with more accuracy and clarity.
2. individuals seemingly have more prestige if their listing, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies are adequately mature.
3. greater enjoyment of reading is in the offing if a person has a rich functional vocabulary.
4. vocabulary development is salient in problem solving. A

person with a rich vocabulary has better chances of solving his/her problems.

5. proficiency at the work place may well depend upon the individual having a rich vocabulary.

6. informal conversation carried on with other people requires, in many cases, quality vocabulary terms.

7. variety in selecting words to convey accurate meanings is necessary in speaking and writing, the outgoes of he language arts.

8. use of diverse terms and concepts in speaking nd writing add variety to quality communication experiences. Vocabulary development is a tool to take in ideas, such as in listening and reading, as well as provide communication to others within the framework of speaking and writing (Ediger, and Rao, 2003, 207-208).

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